

The Word "No" Is Hard to Say

Words are capable of arousing the strongest emotions, and prompting all men's actions.

— Sigmund Freud

by Elayne Savage, Ph.D.

Some people have a hard time saying "no" because they are afraid they won't be liked, and are afraid of being rejected. In fact, they're easy to get along with because they say "yes" a lot. Other people have difficulty saying "no" because they have a hard time receiving it from others. If someone says "no" to them, they hear it as a rejection, and take it personally. They're afraid of hurting the feelings of others the same way they're afraid their own feelings might be hurt. So instead, they become indecisive, wishy-washy.

But saying "yes" and "no" defines who you are — and what you stand for.

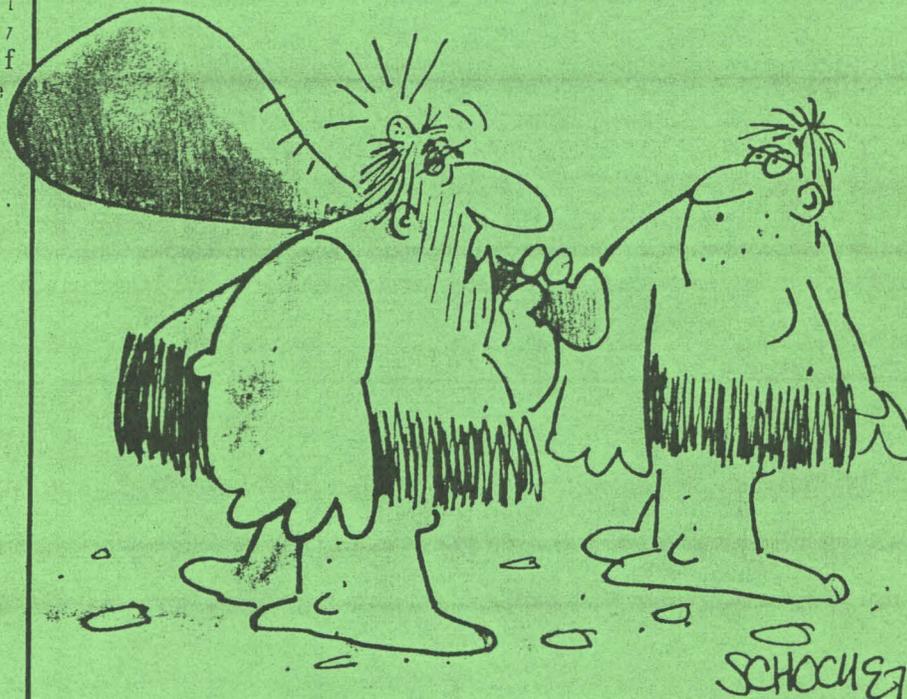
So in spite of how you grew up, you should say "no" to someone — clearly and courteously. You no longer have to pretend to go along with an idea or plan for fear of hurting someone's feelings, or losing the relationship, or the love of that person.

It seems to me that if someone asked you to do something, you could answer in one of five ways:

- "Yes, I can do that."
- "No, I can't do that."
- "I'll think about it, and get back to you."
- "I can't do that, but this is what I can do."
- "I have to say 'no' this time, but try me again."

Even the "no's" don't feel so rejecting when you express yourself in a gracious, even though straightforward, manner.

From DON'T TAKE IT PERSONALLY! by Elayne Savage, Ph.D. © 1997 by Elayne Savage. Published by New Harbinger Publications, Inc., Oakland, CA (www.newharbinger.com)



*"Learning to talk is very important.
But more important is knowing when to keep your mouth shut!"*